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THE UNITED STATES BUREAU OF EDUCATION AND THE IMMIGRANT

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The Americanization of the alien is a process of adjustment to American conditions. Five factors contribute, or should contribute, to this process.

The first of these factors is the protection of the alien from exploitation and defraudation by private bankers, steamship ticket agents, employment agents, padroni and a host of those who feast upon the ignorant and helpless. Such protection by the state impresses upon the alien a higher ideal of American citizenship and eventually makes him a better citizen.

The second factor is the proper employment of the immigrant. A substantial proportion of those immigrating annually are farmers or unskilled laborers. Coming from farms or rural communities, they go into our complex industrial system—into our factories, our shops, our mines. Not equipped by nature or training, not drilled by experience, they enter into a new field of human activity with handicaps which subsequently mean their physical and industrial decline. The failure of America to direct these men into suitable occupations is responsible for many labor difficulties and industrial tribulations disturbing to our American commonwealth.

A closely related factor is that of distribution. In fact, vocational direction of the newly arrived alien is the point of departure for a national system of distribution. Any effort to divert or direct immigrants from "foreign colonies" in our large cities, exerts a powerful influence on their ultimate assimilation by increasing the multiplicity of contacts with Americans. As colonization minimizes contact with outside influences, so obversely does distribution enhance association with American citizens, institutions, forces and ideals.

Education, however, is the most potent force toward inculcating American ideals and impulses. The English language and a knowledge of the civic forces of the country are indispensable to the

alien in adjusting himself to America. Through our common speech comes understanding. Without it the pages of our newspapers are meaningless and ordinary matters of business with Americans must be transacted through the medium of an interpreter. Only by overcoming inability to speak English, by eliminating illiteracy among aliens, and by instilling the ideals, attitudes and habits of thought of America, can we hope to make real American citizens of the strangers within our gates.

Naturalization is the last factor in Americanization, and it is less important. It is merely the legal procedure applied after the other factors have exercised their full influence upon the alien. Being the final step, however, it is necessary that the standard of qualification should be high and that the technicalities of admission to citizenship be reasonable, in order that the process of Americanization actually be contributed to, not hindered.

The education of children of immigrants in the day schools has always been considered a primary and essential function of the school system. But the training of adults in English and civics has not been generally so considered. Evening schools, through which only can adults be reached effectively, have usually been regarded merely as adjuncts to the day-school system, and hence are maintained when funds can be spared or eked out. Adequate facilities for the adult are rarely organized and maintained as an organic part of the educational system with a specific appropriation and unified supervision. In fact, education of immigrants has been left too largely to the well-intentioned but sporadic interest and effort of private organizations and individuals. The provision of public facilities may, therefore, be treated at present and for some time to come as a legitimate extension activity for educational systems.

It is with this latter conception in mind that the United States Bureau of Education has for a considerable period been actively engaged in promoting the extension of facilities for the education of immigrants over the compulsory attendance age. Authority to undertake this extensive program is derived from the organic act creating the bureau in 1867 and from various acts of Congress making appropriations for the purpose of promoting industrial and vocational training, the elimination of illiteracy and the cause of education generally.

From the very beginning a definite, well-articulated procedure has been pursued: (1) to carry on a searching nation-wide inquiry into the entire field of immigrant education; (2) to formulate, compare, and interpret the data thus obtained; (3) to devise standards and methods based upon the experience and practices of those dealing with the subject first-hand; (4) to promote the organization and maintenance of facilities wherever possible; and (5) to develop and shape national, state and city policies in the education of immigrants.

Activity along these lines was made effective by the organization of a Division of Immigrant Education with a staff of experts and assistants specializing in the subject in hand.

INVESTIGATION INTO CONDITIONS

Examination of the Census reports disclosed some astounding facts in 1910. No fewer than 2,896,606 foreign-born whites fifteen years of age and over could not speak the English language. Frequently this handicap was compounded with illiteracy, for 1,636,677 could not read and write in any language. The two closely allied problems thus presented, when taken in connection with the annual immigration from countries in southern and eastern Europe and in Asia, whose varied peoples are not only non-English-speaking but largely illiterate, directly affect the continued existence and stamina of the ideals, institutions and democracy of America.

Nor are these problems substantially diminished by attendance upon school. Only 138,253 foreign-born whites over fifteen years of age were attending school in 1910. As attendance is voluntary for those over sixteen years of age with but two or three exceptions, no appreciable decrease in illiteracy and inability to speak English will occur unless unusual efforts are put forth to extend educational facilities and to induce or compel the attendance of non-English-speaking and illiterate persons upon such facilities.

INADEQUATE FACILITIES AND APPROPRIATIONS

To verify the suspicion that schools and classes for adults were not adequate, a representative made a tour of the country in 1914, visiting most of the important cities where aliens were congregated in large numbers. The information thus secured, together with returns upon several thousand questionnaires sent to all city and

county superintendents of schools, demonstrated conclusively that the facilities for educating the immigrant cannot cope with the present problem. Appropriations for evening-school work were found to be omitted in many instances, or wholly neglected in others. Even in states and cities having an extremely large foreign-born population, sums appropriated were surprisingly low. This fact greatly handicaps school authorities by making it impossible to centralize supervision of immigrant education and by preventing the appointment of teachers specially trained and adapted to this kind of teaching. Superintendents are also unable to pay salaries sufficiently attractive to make it possible for teachers to devote their entire time to evening-school instruction, and are, therefore, obliged to use day-school teachers in the evening schools to the physical detriment of the teachers and consequent loss to the pupils. Inadequate appropriations also shorten the evening-school terms which with a very few exceptions are entirely too short, not only to obtain the best results, but to cover the period of heaviest immigration in the late spring. Similar considerations prevent the proper advertising of schools, classes, and subjects, and the carrying on of well organized publicity campaigns to increase the attendance of foreigners upon evening schools.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE HANDICAPS

A more surprising legal aspect of the situation was disclosed. Not only do few state constitutions provide for school facilities for adults, but many of them, either by limitation as to years or as to state aid for the maintenance of classes for pupils over twenty-one years, place a heavy handicap upon the organization of facilities for adults. This is the case in no fewer than fifteen state constitutions. In few states again do school laws make the establishment of evening schools mandatory upon local school boards, while only eleven states grant financial aid in support of such schools. Thus, without the encouragement of federal aid and frequently even without state assistance, it is not surprising that facilities for the education of the immigrant population are insufficient, especially when it is considered that much of this population is of a transitory nature and communities naturally hesitate to assume the entire financial burden of maintaining schools for the benefit of many who may subsequently remove to another locality.

PROMOTION OF FACILITIES

As an immigrant child, through attending our American schools, does much toward Americanizing its parents, it is important that each immigrant child, immediately upon arrival in this country, be placed in the proper school and grade. Owing to the desire of the immigrant parents, who generally come to this country in impecunious circumstances, that their children from thirteen to sixteen years of age should work, many children of school age are placed in unlawful employment and frequently taught to conceal their correct ages.

FACILITATING ATTENDANCE OF ALIEN CHILDREN

To reduce the seriousness of this condition a coöperative arrangement was developed between the United States Bureau of Education and the United States Bureau of Immigration whereby the names, prospective addresses, ages and other items of identification of all alien children of school age entering our ports are sent to the respective superintendents of those communities to which such children are destined. This plan was put into general operation last fall, and school superintendents have already begun to report that this information supplied by the federal government has materially aided them in locating alien children before they became unlawfully employed, and in ascertaining the correct ages of those who attempt evasion of the compulsory attendance laws.

"AMERICA FIRST" CAMPAIGN

Immigrants generally are not aware either of the existence or nature of evening-school facilities. Annual advertising in the American press by school authorities does not serve to secure the attendance of those who do not speak English or who do not read. An aggressive campaign of publicity by means of posters, handbills, dodgers and newspaper articles in the foreign-language press is necessary. For its psychological effect upon aliens and local communities an "America First" poster was distributed during the fall and winter, 1915-16. Attractively lithographed in red, white and blue, it bore upon its face the unusual invitation in eight languages:

Learn English; Attend Night School; It Means a Better Opportunity and a Better Home in America; It Means a Better Job; It Means a Better Chance for Your Children; It Means a Better America; Ask the Nearest Public School about

Classes; If there is none in your town, write to the United States Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.

A figure of Uncle Sam in the foreground, extending the hand of welcome to an immigrant workingman and pointing with the other to a school, lends to the poster a touch of patriotism and fellowship.

Over one hundred thousand posters were sent to school superintendents, post offices, industrial establishments, chambers of commerce, newspapers, private organizations and individuals. The "America First" idea appealed to the imagination of the country and the prompt requests for posters, coming from all parts of the United States and even from abroad, very shortly exhausted the supply.

As a result of the awakening caused by this campaign the bureau has been called upon to answer requests from school superintendents, principals, teachers, industries, organizations and interested individuals for suggestions in organizing classes for immigrants, for bulletins, publications and statistics, for methods of instruction and for coöperation in a variety of ways. A large number of industries and chambers of commerce immediately expressed a desire to coöperate with the bureau in getting employes to attend classes in English and civics. Several distributed circulars among employes urging attendance; others offered a wage increase to those in regular attendance; some made attendance compulsory; while still others established a rule that in making promotions the English-speaking employe would be given preference over the non-English-speaking. Private organizations especially became active, and while every service possible has been rendered them, they have been uniformly urged to place all educational facilities organized or contemplated under the general supervision of local school officials, in order to avoid duplication of effort and useless expenditure of time and money.

IMMIGRANTS PETITION FOR NIGHT SCHOOLS

The most significant outgrowth of the "America First" campaign is seen in the large number of letters and petitions received from foreigners and written in their native languages. By far the greater number of these was received from communities where no evening schools had been previously maintained. The tenor of

these communications may be gathered from the following petition signed by sixty-five Lithuanians:

TO THE HONORABLE BOARD OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D. C.:—

The undersigned citizens of the United States, of Lithuanian parentage, residing in Melrose Park, Cook County, Illinois, do respectfully petition your Honorable Body to install a free night school in our locality for the purpose of the education of the Lithuanian-American citizens in the English language.

There is at present in our locality no free night school offering any opportunity for foreign born citizens to become educated in the English language, although there are approximately three thousand (3,000) foreign born American citizens in the village of Melrose Park, and surrounding territory.

This and similar requests signed by a large number of foreigners in other communities have been taken up officially with the respective school authorities in communities where the petitioners resided, with the result that suitable classes have been organized in several places where such facilities had never before existed. Where a lack of funds made it impossible for local school boards to respond to these requests, the active coöperation of industries was solicited and classes organized in some communities with private support. Practical considerations, such as increased efficiency, diminution of accidents, and reduction of the cost of supervision, rather than a desire to engage in welfare work for employes, were the motives actuating industrial establishments in conducting, or contributing to the support of, classes in English and civics.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR IMMIGRANT CLASSES

Training of teachers is an important factor in the education of aliens. Without teachers having known ability to teach immigrants, a knowledge of foreign types and the best methods of teaching them, satisfactory progress cannot be made by a class of adults. Hence, school officials have been encouraged to conduct training courses in immigrant methods. A very notable course was conducted by the New York State Department of Education in coöperation with the bureau for teachers in several cities in the vicinity of Albany, N. Y. Interest and attendance were so unusual that the department organized a permanent course in the New York State Teachers' College at Albany, while Buffalo and Rochester Boards of Education were also inspired to arrange and conduct similar training courses for teachers in their respective sections of the state. The United States Bureau of Education has also coöperated with Boston and Detroit by furnishing a lecturer for similar institutes.

While local efforts in the training of teachers are direct and efficient for local purposes, it is necessary to look to the colleges, universities and normal schools for that general training which will produce a teacher or social worker of ability, insight, and vision. Inquiry disclosed that only fourteen such institutions, out of one hundred forty-seven reporting, had special courses in "Immigration," and even these courses were treated in a purely academic manner. Sixty-nine conducted lectures in connection with courses in economics, history, and sociology, while sixty-three reported no attention whatever to the subject of immigration or the training of students for service among immigrants. To stimulate activity a "Professional Course for Service Among Immigrants" was prepared for use in colleges and other higher institutions of learning. A circular letter directed to the heads of such institutions tendered coöperation in the introduction of the course. In response thirty-four institutions have expressed the possibility of adopting the course in whole or in part. By special arrangement a training course of fifteen lectures was given by a representative of the Bureau in Yale University this spring for which elective credits were given. The experience thus gained will provide the basis for a revision of the published course.

Although the immigrant woman is no small factor in the "Americanization" program, but little attention has been given her in the past. The duties of the home and objections on the part of husbands and fathers make it a difficult task to enroll foreign women and girls in the evening schools. The initial responsibility for making points of contact for the immigrant mother and daughter with Americans rests primarily upon American women and upon their clubs and organizations. A program of work for women's organizations has been prepared for general distribution, covering a study and promotion of night school facilities, library facilities, home education, and improvement of living conditions, together with a variety of other activities for the amelioration of the conditions of immigrant women.

FORMULATION OF STANDARDS AND METHODS

One of the most important functions is the formulation of standards and methods. "Standards," however, does not mean "standardization," but the statement of policies, practice, or

methods of the most advanced and approved kind. As the bureau has no administrative authority over the schools of this country, it can promote standards only by the presentation of facts, experience and reasoning, and by demonstration of their efficiency and merit.

For the purpose of paving the way to approved standards and methods in immigrant education, a tentative schedule has been prepared, dealing with recommended legislative action, organization and administration of educational facilities, factors and agencies for training, and content and methods of instruction.

Constructive state legislation is urged looking toward compulsory attendance of non-English-speaking and illiterate persons under twenty-one years, and a general requirement that classes in English and civics be maintained in all communities where twenty or more aliens are affected by the provisions of the suggested compulsory attendance law or where that number formally petition for evening schools.

A NATIONAL, STATE AND CITY PROGRAM

No extension propaganda can be ultimately successful unless it grow out of a constructive program. To insure the constructive nature of any program, the most approved practices must be considered in connection with needs and conditions. Such consideration has developed the following national, state and city program, which because of its intimate bearing upon the various extension activities of state and local school systems is set forth at length at this point:

NATIONAL PROGRAM

(1) Formulate standards and methods in the education of immigrants and plan and prepare standard courses in English and civics.

(2) Continue the sending of names and other facts of identification of alien children admitted at ports of entry, to proper school officials at points of destination in order to aid enforcement of labor, compulsory attendance, and other school laws. Place in the hands of each child of school age suitable material regarding educational opportunities in the United States.

(3) Publish and distribute an educational handbook for aliens

dealing with evening schools, libraries, compulsory attendance laws, colleges and other educational opportunities and information.

PROGRAM FOR STATES

(1) Amend the education laws to necessitate compulsory attendance of non-English-speaking and illiterate minors between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years, fixing the standard of literacy as equivalent to that necessary to completion of the fifth grade in the public schools. Make this effective by amending the labor laws to prohibit the employment of such minors unless weekly reports of regular attendance are presented to employers.

(2) Require all communities, where twenty or more aliens affected by the amendment proposed in (1) above, or where twenty or more petition formally, to establish and maintain evening schools or other appropriate facilities in which English and civics are taught throughout a period of at least one hundred sessions in communities of less than 100,000 population and of at least one hundred twenty sessions in communities of over 100,000 population.

(3) Multiply media for educating foreigners, such as camp schools, industrial and vocational schools, continuation and part-time schools.

(4) Develop traveling libraries of foreign-language books, and books in English suitable to foreign-born readers, and place such libraries in evening schools where foreigners are receiving instruction.

(5) Grant state aid, subject to appropriate requirements, to cities and school districts compelled to establish or maintain facilities pursuant to the operation of the compulsory attendance amendment above referred to.

(6) Centralize general control and supervision over classes in the state department of education.

(7) Prepare bulletins and syllabi for local use and standardize classes, terms and courses.

(8) Provide free textbooks or authorize city and district school boards to provide them in evening schools and classes.

PROGRAM FOR CITIES

(1) In large cities concentrate all immigrant educational activities for persons above compulsory attendance age under one supervisor appointed by the superintendent of education with

powers to coördinate classes, courses, methods and subject matter, and otherwise organize the education of aliens as a unit.

(2) Appoint teachers of English on the basis of known ability to teach immigrants, experience, training and knowledge of foreign types.

(3) Conduct teachers' training courses for the purpose of demonstrating the best methods of teaching English and civics to immigrants, and for establishing standards in subject-matter and methods.

(4) Lengthen the evening-school term to cover the spring period of heavy immigration, giving three nights of instruction per week, one and a half hours per evening.

(5) Establish branch or deposit stations of the city library in all schools where students are taught, selecting books with the assistance of committees from foreign societies made up of the better educated foreigners, and also securing from the state traveling library books in English and foreign languages suitable to adults.

(6) Develop the use of schools as neighborhood centers for meetings of foreigners' societies and parents' associations.

(7) Advertise evening-school facilities in foreign-language newspapers; distribute circulars and posters in the principal foreign languages throughout the foreign quarters; post notices in factories where aliens are employed; send letters to foreign organizations requesting coöperation; and appoint committees of foreigners to procure attendance of adult immigrants.

(8) Ascertain the type of educational work for foreigners being conducted by private agencies, and solicit the coöperation of such organizations.

The coöperation of all interested public and private agencies has at all times been solicited by the United States Bureau of Education in order that all may work together in a complete educational program of Americanization. Only through such mutual assistance can any national, state, or city program be effectively carried out. Standards depend for their maintenance upon the support of the public. Needed legislation will be secured only when interested individuals and organizations unite in demanding its passage. The national publicity campaign now being organized to extend facilities and to increase the attendance of immigrants will demand the interest and coöperation of every patriotic American.